

What is Claimed:

1. A generic product finder system for managing and performing searches on configurable products in a J2EE application comprising:
 - a manager component for performing searches in response to a search query;
 - a product component for persisting a plurality of product information and interacting with the manger component in conducting searches of the product information;
 - a product metadata component that interacts with the manager component for defining a product specification; and
 - a search configuration component that interacts with the manager component for constructing a set of search rules in a product search configuration.
2. The generic product finder system for managing and performing searches of claim 1 wherein the manager component is a session bean object and a single point-of-entry to the product information.
3. The generic product finder system for managing and performing searches of claim 1 wherein the product specification is defined by metadata.
4. The generic product finder system for managing and performing searches of claim 3 wherein the product specification metadata conform to an XML schema.
5. The generic product finder system for managing and performing searches of claim 1

wherein the product information is persisted by the use of an entity bean.

6. The generic product finder system for managing and performing searches of claim 1 wherein the product information is grouped into parameters and accessories.
7. The generic product finder system for managing and performing searches of claim 1 wherein the product parameters define a set of basic characteristics for a product.
8. The generic product finder system for managing and performing searches of claim 1 wherein the product accessories define a set of optional characteristics for a product.
9. The generic product finder system for managing and performing searches of claim 1 wherein the product parameters are defined as XML elements having a plurality of attributes.
10. The generic product finder system for managing and performing searches of claim 1 wherein the product accessories are defined as XML elements having a plurality of attributes.
11. The generic product finder system for managing and performing searches of claim 1 wherein the search configuration component defines a search configuration for each type of product.

12. The generic product finder system for managing and performing searches of claim 1 wherein the search configurations are generated dynamically.
13. The generic product finder system for managing and performing searches of claim 1 wherein the set of search rules define a set of product search behavior.
14. The generic product finder system for managing and performing searches of claim 1 wherein the set of search rules include weight values to apply to product information for ordering of partial matches in determining products to identify as a result of the search performed.
15. The generic product finder system for managing and performing searches of claim 1 further comprising an interface for accessing the manager component to initiate a product search.
16. The generic product finder system for managing and performing searches of claim 15 wherein the interface is a Simple Object Access Protocol (SOAP) interface.
17. The generic product finder system for managing and performing searches of claim 15 wherein the interface is a remote interface integrated with the J2EE application.
18. A method for managing and performing searches on configurable products in a J2EE application, comprising the steps of:

creating a manager component that conducts searches in a response to a search query;
generating a product metadata component that interacts with the product manager component to define a product specification;
persisting a plurality of product information that interacts with the manager component in conducting searches of the product information; and
generating a search configuration component that interacts with the manager component in conducting searches for product information that matches a criterion in the search query.

19. The method for managing and performing searches on configurable products of claim 18 further comprising the step of constructing a set of search rules to use in searching the plurality of product information.
20. The method for managing and performing searches on configurable products of claim 18 further comprising the act of persisting the product information using entity beans.
21. The method for managing and performing searches on configurable products of claim 18 further comprising the act of defining the product specification by metadata.
22. The method for managing and performing searches on configurable products of claim 21 wherein the product specification metadata conforms to an XML schema.

23. The method for managing and performing searches on configurable products of claim 18 further comprising the act of persisting product information by using entity beans.
24. The method for managing and performing searches on configurable products of claim 18 further comprising the act of grouping product information into a plurality of parameters and a plurality of accessories.
25. The method for managing and performing searches on configurable products of claim 18 wherein the plurality of parameters define a set of basic characteristics for a product.
26. The method for managing and performing searches on configurable products of claim 18 wherein the plurality of accessories define a set of optional characteristics for a product.
27. The method for managing and performing searches on configurable products of claim 18 further comprising the act of defining product parameters as XML elements having a plurality of attributes.
28. The method for managing and performing searches on configurable products of claim 18 further comprising the act of defining product accessories as XML elements having a plurality of attributes.
29. The method for managing and performing searches on configurable products of claim 18 further comprising the step of defining a search configuration for each type of product.

30. The method for managing and performing searches on configurable products of claim 19 further comprising the act of applying weight values to product information to order partial matches in determining products to identify as a result of the search performed.
31. The method for managing and performing searches on configurable products of claim 18 further comprising the step of providing an interface for accessing the manager component to initiate a product search.
32. A computer program product for managing and performing searches on configurable products, the computer program product comprising:
- a recording medium;
 - program instructions recorded on the recording medium for conducting searches in response to a search query;
 - program instructions recorded on the recording medium for defining a product specification;
 - program instructions recorded on the recording medium for persisting a plurality of product information and interacting with the program instructions for conducting searches for use in conducting searches of the product information for matching products; and

program instructions recorded on the recording medium for generating a search configuration and interactive with the program instructions for conducting searches for product information that match a criterion in the search query.

33. The computer program product for managing and performing searches on configurable products of claim 32 further comprising program instructions recorded on the recording medium for constructing a set of search rules to use in searching the plurality of product information.
34. The computer program product for managing and performing searches on configurable products of claim 32 further comprising program instructions recorded on the recording medium for persisting the product specification using entity beans.
35. The computer program product for managing and performing searches on configurable products of claim 32 further comprising program instructions recorded on the recording medium for defining the product specification by metadata.
36. The computer program product for managing and performing searches on configurable products of claim 35 wherein the product specification metadata conforms to an XML schema.
37. The computer program product for managing and performing searches on configurable products of claim 32 further comprising program instructions recorded on the recording

medium for persisting product information by using session beans.

38. The computer program product for managing and performing searches on configurable products of claim 32 further comprising program instructions recorded on the recording medium for grouping product information into a plurality of parameters and a plurality of accessories.
39. The computer program product for managing and performing searches on configurable products of claim 32 further comprising program instructions recorded on the recording medium for defining product parameters as XML elements having a plurality of attributes.
40. The computer program product for managing and performing searches on configurable products of claim 32 further comprising program instructions recorded on the recording medium for defining product accessories as XML elements having a plurality of attributes.
41. The computer program product for managing and performing searches on configurable products of claim 32 further comprising program instructions recorded on the recording medium for defining a search configuration for each type of product.
42. The computer program product for managing and performing searches on configurable products of claim 41 further comprising program instructions recorded on the recording

medium for applying weight values to product information to order partial matches in determining products to identify as a result of the search performed.

43. The computer program product for managing and performing searches on configurable products of claim 32 further comprising program instructions recorded on the recording medium for providing an interface for accessing the manager component to initiate a product search.